

# **An Easy Guide to Social Justice Student Organizations**

An Honors Thesis (HONOR 499)

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**Abstract**

This piece is a restructured Student Organization Handbook, with a focus on social justice organizations. Social justice organizations are those that work for equality on different planes of life. The restructured handbook contains sections on planning out a group, holding meetings, group leadership and development, activities on and off campus, and group ending. Ball State policies for student organizations are woven throughout the handbook.

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# **An Easy Guide to Social Justice Student Organizations**

According to Rhoads in his book on student activist movements of this century, social justice is the desire of people who hold an utopian view of the world: people who see what the world could be, see what it is lacking in, and do not fear the feelings of isolation that comes from those contrasting views. More modern sources define social justice as the desire for equality and diversity, with equal opportunity for all despite our differences (Robinson, 2014).

For those that believe in the causes of social justice, it can be frustrating to find that the majority of the population will reject the changes that are presented to them. Often a minority group, ideologically, those who advocate for social justice frequently find their options outside of the normal range of political activities. To many, being politically active includes little more than being aware and participating in elections. However, this internal facet of political life is not the only piece of political action. According to writings of McIntosh and Youniss (2010), the individual recognition of political thoughts is not inherently political. Only once those thoughts are turned outwards toward the collective can a person call themselves politically active, according to those authors. When speaking of social justice, we are referring to individuals who have turned to the collective to achieve change in society through collaborative action.

In recent history of social justice movements, the activities and efforts of social movements have become institutionalized and normalized (Schussman and Soule, 2005). The riots at Kent State in 1970 and the anti-apartheid protests of the 1980s would have difficulty

gaining traction in the current social climate. The bold tactics of past social revolutionaries that were used to draw attention to a cause to drive interest and participation are now legislated at every level, from national laws for freedom of speech to local ordinances for security (Schussman and Soule). It is increasingly difficult for activists to pull off successful demonstrations, with the number of rules that they are required to obey, in addition to expected organizational challenges.

That brings us to this guidebook. As a result of the violent protest movement of the 1960's, college campus administrations have developed policies for students who wish to express themselves in non-traditional ways. The purpose of this guide is to explore the current policies on Ball State's campus, and to discuss the best methods for forming and leading groups that seek to bring student activism for forms of social justice to Ball State.

There are strict laws surrounding action groups, interest groups, and other types of organizations in the United States. The University of Texas (2009) defines both interest groups and action groups as groups of people who aim to organize and inform themselves and others about an issue. They serve as a link between people and the government.

Unless a group of citizens decides to lobby or to contribute to an electoral campaign, they are free to do whatever they like, under the law. Once a group decides to lobby or to participate in a campaign, tax law gets involved (Twyman and Whitney, 2013). As campus groups, we obey a slightly different set of laws and are held to different standards than normal action or interest groups. Campus organizations are still subject to federal, state, and local laws, but in addition are also subject to University codes and policies. These additional regulations add another layer of challenge to students wishing to be politically active. Fear of retribution is a strong deterrent for many from engaging in political action, and the long list of authority figures can keep students from action (Levine, 2011). Since they fall under the jurisdiction of a university, most campus organizations also benefit from special protections, such as insurance and the legal expertise of the university.

According to Schussman and Soule's study on individual participation in political action, (2005) the following factors increase a person's likelihood of engaging in protest movements: political interest, access to information, sense of efficacy, being liberal, and being a student. This is not to say that only liberal minded students can be politically active, just that they are

more likely to be politically active by Schussman and Soule's standards. Students are seen as having low levels of commitment to family or to jobs that would inhibit them from participating in social demonstrations, while also having more free time to engage in political activities and education.

When one thinks of college students as activists, most think immediately of students during the 1960's, or of drug using anti-war activists in the early 1970's. Most of the literature surrounding student activism focuses on these times, as they were very visible and had a concrete purpose. However, those classic images of student activism were not the only ones to exist.

There were many social movements at work during the 1960's. These included the civil right's movement, which many students throughout the country took part in; the anti-war movement during the middle and end of the decade; the movement for free speech at Berkeley's campus in California that resulted in the institutionalization and legislation of student political activities; the women's movement; and the gay liberation movement, of which the reverberations are still being felt today (Rhoads, Free Speech Movement Chronology).

The 1970's were no quieter than the riotous 60's, at least on college campuses. Anti-war activists were still active through the end of the war in Vietnam in the early 70's, with famous riots occurring at Kent State University.



The mid-70's posed a change in the perception of student activism. Rhoads credits older students of the 1960's movements with looking down on the younger activists as "wannabes", which led this generation of students to avoid political vocalization. Arthur Levine points to a different source for the quieting of university life: the death of Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, John F. Kennedy and Bobby Kennedy, all seen as civic heroes. Levine states, "their dreams and heroes had died" (Rhoads). Similarly, the 1980's were a quiet decade, with student activists utilizing political pathways that had been established in the 60's to achieve change over a number of causes (Taggart, 1998).

The 1990's brought about another wave of politicization and student activism on college campuses. Instead of movements centered around the actions of the state around the world, such as the movements against the war in Vietnam and the anti-apartheid movement, this decade turned inward to challenge the way that people treated each other. The movements of this decade were termed as "multiculturalism" and "identity politics": they focused on the rights of individuals due to personal characteristics (Rhoads). Feminism became popular again, as women felt the push of patriarchy and androcentrism; latino student unions advocated for the rights of latino students, black student organizations for the black students, gay rights groups for those who supported freedom of sexual persecution. Arthur Levine traced the rise in "support and advocacy groups", which replaced traditional political groups, to black student associations of the 1950's (Rhoads).

The current decade seems to have just begun, but trends in student activism are already apparent. Student activists move through increasingly more complex bureaucratic systems, often with the assistance of national interest groups that provide support to young activists. Activism is often seen in the form of online petitions such as those found on [change.org](https://www.change.org) that require little more than a checked box and valid email account to provide would be activists with feelings of contentment. Yet, social justice organizations on campus are thriving. While they may not boast of the amount of members as movements of the 1960's, they make up for in the number of clubs and groups across each campus. Some blame the multitude of social justice groups for the lack of volume they produce: Pauli wrote that multicultural student groups are to blame for the splintering of students that otherwise would have worked together to achieve change (Pauli, 2011).

These groups are important both to the students who take part in them and to the movements that they support. Student activists are three times more likely than other students to be flourishing in their mental health (Klar and Kassir, 2009). The authors of that study pointed to the ability of student activists to feel successful agency and to see logical and accessible pathways for meeting goals as sources of this positive mental health (Klar and Kassir). Agency and access to pathways for meeting goals in relation to a social justice cause are skills that students learn through participation in student activist groups. Even the ideas of Erikson can be seen to support participation in student groups: students who work towards what they believe is a better future are fulfilling their desire for generativity in promoting the

wellbeing of a society (Klar and Kassar). In addition, students who participate in student groups often find friendship within the group, which is beneficial to all involved (Schussman and Soule).

Beyond promoting positive mental health in participants as argued by Klar and Kassar, student groups are important to the causes that they support. Student activist groups often focus not only on legislation and on traditional routes for political change, but utilize demonstrations and activities to bring about a conversation on the issue. Confrontation and discussion brings people who might wish to remain moderate in to decision and action and works to educate the public of the problem (Jacqueneay, 1972). In the study by Schussman and Soule, it was found that the best way to motivate a person to join a demonstration would be to ask them directly. To quote the study, "contentions political activity must be understood as developing through social interaction" (Schussman and Soule). If the factor that most influenced people in to demonstrations was human interaction, it is not unreasonable to believe that the same would apply towards other types of political activities as well. Thus, the point of student groups becomes to recruit people from the college community to move together to promote a solution to a problem. Student groups in this way promote community and further involvement by the student body. It is common knowledge that political participation is down across the demographic board; perhaps the best way to remedy this is through active student groups working to build a vocal community around an issue.



An important aspect of students who participate in student activist groups is that they have an activist identity. Activists see themselves and their actions in relation to others, and in this way build themselves a place in the community (Rhoads, 1998). This identity helps activists in their positive mental health, as well as promotes other community members in to action as well. Tom Hayden, one of the writers of the Port Huron Statement, wrote that politics should “bring people out of isolation and into the community” (Rhoads). Regardless of the success of the agenda of individual social justice groups, the forming of community around an issue is an invaluable effect of these groups.

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# Manual for Student Organizations



Before going in to the technical steps of forming a social justice group, it is important to address several questions regarding the group purpose. Answering these questions will help to ensure that the group will achieve it's purpose.

### **What do you stand for?**

No matter where you live, there will always be people who don't see eye to eye. Identifying both the perceived social problem and possible solutions is the beginning to a social justice organization. If you are passionate about both a problem and a solution to the problem, you are halfway to activism. Making the decision to start an organization to achieve the solution to the problem is one possible step in addressing social problems. Being aware of issues and the dialogue surrounding them is the gateway to social justice.

As a (potential) club founder, it is important that you are secure in your own beliefs. Social justice clubs are sometimes contested, and are often controversial. In order to lead a social justice group, you must know as much as you can about your topic. As the founder of the club, you are proclaiming yourself to be the student-expert on campus. Embrace that role and do your research.

### **What do you hope to achieve?**

Any organization without goals is doomed to flounder prematurely. Do you wish to provide a place for people who agree to discuss the ins and outs of your topic? Or are you looking to start a conversation with the greater campus community? Maybe you are looking to promote a change on Ball State's campus, or maybe in national law. Whatever your goals are, it is vital that you know what they are before beginning to work.

In order to successfully define your goals, it will be important to address what success looks like, and to define both internal and external success (Levi). What does a functioning group look like from the inside? What other groups do you wish to emulate, and why? Examining the differences between a successful public face of a group and successful internal workings can mean a difference in operations. In order to be successful, a group must have clear direction, strong leadership, resources, and a supportive environment (Levi). As much as you may want to jump in to the recruitment stages of starting a group, it is important to address these nitty-gritty details prior to involving the general public.

Of course, it is always possible to change your goals to reflect the needs and desires of the club membership, once you have club members to contribute opinions. Without those starting goals, it will be difficult to find members willing to commit their time to your organization.

When thinking of your goals, also consider what you will be able to accomplish under university regulations. If your goals include any amount of activity that might be considered political, you may have difficulty gaining university approval. More details about what is and is not allowed is covered in chapter 5.

**Why will other people want to achieve this? What will draw people to your group?**

An organization without members cannot exist. Before going through the work of forming an organization, take the time to reflect on whether or not the group is something people will want to join, and whether or not it will be sustainable.

People associate with groups for many reasons. Two major reasons are for social identification and social representation (Levi). Social identification occurs when a group functions to help members feel cohesion as compared to another group, with an us vs. them feeling. Social representation is where the purpose of the group is not to define yourself as different from another group, but to find others who are like you. Group membership allows people to feel included in something larger than themselves, while drawing meaning from calling themselves a member.

**Is this need being filled by another organization or group?**

A very important step to beginning a social justice group is evaluating the need for such a group on campus. If another group already exists that aims to meet your goals, creating another group will only serve to challenge the membership of the existing groups. It is important to examine the currently existing clubs on campus to see if there is another group that already focuses on the topic that you wish to promote or challenge. The campus Pride Guide is an invaluable source for this step. Even if there does not appear to be another group focusing on your issue of choice, it might be wise to get in contact with students in other social justice organizations, as students who are social justice-minded might be in multiple groups, and might know if any of their activities would coincide with what you wish to accomplish, or if there might be another such group in the process of forming. It is also important to keep in mind that these connections with other social justice groups might be valuable later on, when building your own membership.

### **Has a group similar to this existed before?**

The Office of Student Life maintains a Student Organization Database, which lists every student organization that has existed in the past. Students do not have access to this database, but all Student Life support staff have access to it and can search for a student organization upon request. If there is an organization similar to what you intend to start, submitting an Intent to Reactivate packet instead of an Intent to Organize packet will save you a lot of work. The Intent to Reactive packet requires a new advisor and a new constitution,



but is exempt from needing approval from the Student Activities Committee. Pursuing a previously existing organization will save your organization a lot of time in the beginning of the semester.

### **How will your group be organized?**

Once you have your ideas set on what you wish to accomplish with your group, it is important to consider how you wish to structure your group. Some groups may benefit from a very structured setting, with a full executive board and formal pathways for responsibility and power. Other groups may benefit more from open structures and shared responsibility.

Within social justice causes there can be a delicate balance between formal power structures and grassroots organizing (Kliedman). If you decide on a formal power structure, such as having an executive board, it will be important to decide which positions are necessary, and the extent of their responsibilities and powers. Regardless of the structure, someone has to make decisions, and strong leadership skills and knowledge of open pathways are important.

In order to adopt and change with the group's needs, the group must be aware of their options. Ball State policies do require that recognized organizations submit information on leadership to the Office of Student Life periodically, and have on file a set of bylaws that include an executive board. However, it may not be important to become a formal organization, depending on your goals.

How will your group be funded?

It is difficult to achieve much without some source of funding. Unless you plan to finance your organization through your own pocket, funding must be considered. Money can be brought in to a club through member dues, fundraising activities, and Student Government Co-Sponsorship.

**Should you apply for University recognition?**

Becoming an official organization has its benefits. Official organizations have the ability to reserve rooms for meetings and activities, to hold tabling events on campus, opportunities for funding through SGA, access to their own computer login and email account by submitting a Username Request Form, and opportunities to participate in semesterly activity fairs.

Recognized student groups can make copies at the Cardinal Copy Center in AJ 247, can obtain a university financial account and access financial advising services, can send mail through central mailing, can access services through Student Legal Services in SC L-17, and can submit events to the communications center. However, if your group would benefit more from an open structure and doesn't see the need for these opportunities, then going official may not be for you. If your group does not need to post any advertisements or hold any events on campus, then the paperwork will not be necessary. Then again, without access to space or new members, a group may not truly be anything more than a group of friends meeting for a



purpose. Nevertheless, this guide may be helpful. In addition, it should also be known that groups may always go inactive or reactive if they have gone inactive.

### **What should you call your group?**

Once you have chosen a topic, set goals, and decided on a structure, the next step is to choose a name for your group. The name should reflect something of your topic, in order to easily let people know what you aim to accomplish, and what they can expect by joining. The name should be easy to remember, and not be similar to other campus groups already in existence. It might be beneficial to have an acronym if the name is long. In addition, it is important to note that no organization may have "Ball State" in the title.

### **Next steps**

If you have decided against pursuing status as an official group, you're all set now to court new members and begin meeting. If you wish to become an official group, the following guidelines list what needs to happen to achieve official status.

### **Becoming an official group**

All documents related to forming an official student group can be found under the "campus life" tab on the university website, or here: <http://cms.bsu.edu/campuslife/studentlife/studentorgs/neworgs>.

There is a list of requirements for groups seeking official status, all contained in the Intent to Organize packet. The first page of the packet asks for a list of information: Name, purpose, president, officers, contact information, mailing address, and advisor.

Once you have submitted your Intent to Organize packet, you are able to publicize your group meetings and reserve meeting space. You can also acquire a mailbox in the Student Center.

Groups also must have a mailing address. It is advised that this address is not a personal address, as that will complicate the continuation of the club beyond that officer's term. Mail boxes can be attained from the Office of Student Life (OSL). The OSL is located in the Student Center, room 133.

The next section of the packet is the constitution.

### **Writing the Constitution**

The Intent to Organize packet contains a very clear guide to writing the constitution. So long as the instructions in that section of the packet are followed, there should be no issues with constructing a good constitution. If you need additional instruction or examples, it might be helpful to ask the president of another organization to see their constitution. Each club has one, and additional examples may solve any difficulties you might have.

## Elections

Within the constitution must be the process for holding elections. There are many options regarding elections, and they must be carefully considered.

Before elections can be held, candidates must be nominated. Nominations for positions can come from a committee, who examine those eligible for office and make recommendations; from the floor, where members nominate each other directly; or by ballot. Regardless of how nominations are made, members must have the opportunity to decline a nomination (Robert's Rules).

Once potential officers have been nominated, elections can take place. Elections can occur by voice or by ballot. Elections by voice have the potential to hurt feelings, as each member must say in front of the rest who they wish to see in each position. Conversely, ballot elections take more time to count.

Voice elections can occur with all members voting at once with "aye" and "nae"; this method may be difficult to count. Election by voice can also occur through each member individually casting their vote.

Elections by ballot can look many different ways. A slate ballot may be created, where all offices and nominees are listed and each voter checks off their vote. Another method is to have a separate paper for each office, where members write the name of the nominee.

Someone should be designated as the teller, to count ballots and announce the winners of the election.

It is important to discuss what the terms of an election will be, and when the elections will take place. Most campus groups have officer terms of one year. This allows officers time to learn their positions and to affect change in a group. Benefits of semester-long terms would include giving students who student teach or study abroad an equal opportunity to gain leadership experience.

There are benefits and drawbacks to the different timing options for election cycles. Holding elections at the end of the academic year for the duration of the following year gives a sense of continuity to positions, as officers do not change mid-year. It allows officers to build relationships with other officers, advisors, and club members without inserting a long break between sessions.

Holding mid-year elections works out well for students who study abroad in the spring, or who have practicum or internships in the spring that draw their attention away from campus. It also helps to provide support for incoming officers, as previous officers are less likely to have graduated at the midpoint than at the end of the year. Officers also have the summer to plan for the coming year, instead of needing to hit the ground running as a new exec board would.

### **Writing the Bylaws**

Not every group requires bylaws. The purpose of bylaws are to formalize rules for meetings that can be edited more easily than the constitution. They are commonly used for large groups that require more rules to maintain order.

Bylaws follow a similar format as a constitution. If you believe your organization requires bylaws, then crafting them similarly to the constitution or modeling them after the bylaws of another organization might work well.

Robert's Rules of Order, Chapter 20 also provides a potential structure for bylaws, and is available through the Ball State Library.

### **Finding an Advisor**

Every club must have an advisor. An advisor must be Ball State faculty. Finding an advisor has the potential to be a simple process, and the potential to take a lot of searching. Faculty are busy people and have a lot of responsibilities implicit in their jobs, and many will not want the added responsibility of watching over a group of students after hours.

An advisor may be a professor who you have had in class, who you know and have a relationship with already. Another way to find an advisor is to identify different departments where faculty's interests may mirror your club's focus, and to ask within the department for professors whose specialty reflects your topic. Often faculty will have relationships with other professors in their department and across the university. Even if they do not want to be a club advisor, they may be able to suggest someone who would be interested. Finding an advisor is a process of asking questions and making relationships.

### Conclusion

Making the decision to form an organization on campus results in a long list of steps. Only by carefully determining the level of interest in the campus community and comparing that to existing resources can a person determine whether or not a club is needed. Once a need is identified, there are very clear steps provided by the university to formalize a club.



A first meeting can be a scary occurrence. As a leader of a meeting, it can be difficult to plan when you aren't sure what will happen. This first meeting can also be important in that students are busy people. If there aren't impressed with what you have to offer, there's a chance they might not come back. Careful planning can help things to run smoothly.

Before thinking about content, you must first straighten out the logistics of the meeting. When will it be, where will you hold it and who will attend? Date and time are personal preferences and depend on the membership of your group. Think of who you think will attend, and of their commitments when choosing a time.

There are many considerations to consider when choosing a place. Is it somewhere central on campus, where many people will be able to access it easily? Does your target audience have classes in that building normally? Will younger members of the campus community be able to find the room you choose? (I'm looking at you, North Quad).

Once you choose a space, there are two options. You can reserve a space, or not. If you choose not to reserve a space, you risk the room being locked or occupied. However, if you are not an official group, this may be your only option, unless you choose to meet outside. If you decide to reserve a room, email Charlie Scofield at [cscofield@bsu.edu](mailto:cscofield@bsu.edu) at least 2 full business days prior to the meeting. Mr. Scofield is in charge of room reservations for all of

campus, and is a very busy man. Request rooms as far in advance as possible to ensure a space.

### Getting the word out

Once you have logistics worked out it is time to recruit people to attend your meeting. You might contact the presidents of other social justice groups, to see if you could attend a meeting and pitch your new group to people who are already interested in some form of social justice. If you know of a class whose subject matter relates to your topic, you might ask that professor if you could announce the meeting before class begins. Word of mouth is a very effective method of gaining members, particularly if you can then tailor the time and place to the needs of the people that you speak with.

Another option is to hang flyers advertising your call out meeting on public bulletin boards, as discussed in chapter 3 of this manual.

### Goal Setting

In order to file your organization papers with the university, you must have already established a mission. A mission articulates values, but does not tell your group how you plan to achieve it (Levi). Goals are needed to help define success and to set your members on a path to achieving the mission.



There are 4 types of goals to distinguish between. They are to generate, negotiate, choose, and execute (Levi, McGrath 1984). Each type of goal fulfills a different purpose for your organization, and requires different actions upon the adoption by your group. It is important to recognize what type of goal you are utilizing so that you are aware of the actions that need to be taken.

### Setting Goals

Anyone who has ever read an article or taken a class in which goals were discussed has heard of SMART goals (Doran, 1981). SMART stands for:

Specific

Measurable

Attainable

Realistic

Timely

Goals must be specific enough that everyone involved knows exactly what the goal is. Specific goals leave no doubt as to what the objective is. Measurable goals allow you to know when the goal has been achieved. Without the ability to measure, there is no proof of progress.

Attainable and realistic goals are those that are within the reach of those involved. Goals that

are too lofty result in wasted efforts. Timely goals have a pre-determined timeline. Everyone involved knows when each piece of the goal will be completed, and adheres to that timeline.

Smart goals are also operational; this means that the group putting the plan in to action has all the tools they need to achieve the goal (Zastrow).

There are several factors in groups that affect their ability to achieve goals. One of these is their degree of task reflexivity (Levi). Task reflexivity is the ability of group members to reflect on their tasks, or goals, and to evaluate their effectiveness. If their actions are not effective in meeting goals, task reflexive groups are able to alter their tasks to meet their goals, or to alter their goals in order to better adhere to their mission.

Another factor that affects a group's ability to complete tasks is the conflict between the group's goals and its member's personal agendas (Levi). An agenda is a person's reason for participating in a group; an agenda may be open or hidden. Understanding other people's reasons for participation in a group may help to ensure that goals are understood by all, and that personal desires will not interfere with the group's plans.

Personal agendas do not always mean that a person is working against the interest of a group. An agenda can also indicate the level of value that a person puts on a group. A person who is

only marginally interested in a group will be less likely to complete action steps than one who is highly invested in the success of the group (Levi)

Regardless of where group members are in terms of their own agendas and levels of involvement, successful group goals are those that allow group goals and member goals to be accomplished with the same tasks (Zastrow). Smart group leaders are able to recognize individual agendas and to tie those desires in to group goals.

### **Brainstorming**

Brainstorming occurs when group members take time to think up ideas together.

Brainstorming works best when members feel comfortable and able to open up to each other. Everyone should be encouraged to contribute to the discussion while brainstorming, although nothing should be forced. Brainstorming allows group members to collaborate in the process of planning the group's future, and can have a cohesive effect on the group.

### **Turning goals in to tasks**

Once goals are set, they must be broken down in to individual steps. This can be done either by chronology or by type. Goals broken up by chronology list tasks in a sequence in which each step must be completed before moving to the next one. Goals broken down by type categorize similar actions in to like steps.

Individual tasks must then be delegated successfully in order to occur. When delegating tasks, each person involved must clearly know their role and expectations. Include a timeline for completion, and hold people responsible. Everyone must know how their tasks fit in to the whole, and be aware of the priorities of the group to ensure successful completion (Zastrow). In addition to having each task given a timeframe, it is helpful to have a master list of deadlines for the group, so that in the presence of multiple goals and tasks everyone can remain focused and clear.

### Steps of goal development

- ⇒ Clear understanding of mission
- ⇒ Brainstorm ways of accomplishing mission
- ⇒ Develop sequence of events that would bring about occurrence of mission
- ⇒ Create SMART steps to reaching that occurrence
- ⇒ Delegate tasks and implement plan

### Conclusion

When planning a first meeting, it is wise to lay out both the logistics of the meeting and to have a plan for what will be discussed. By creating group goals during a first meeting,

potential members are allowed to help shape the direction that the group takes, to make it a true student organization.

It is not enough just to have the formal organization in place for a club to exist. Without members, a club cannot achieve anything.

This section aims to discuss how to gain and retain members.

### **University requirements for maintaining an organization**

There are several steps that organizations must follow in order to stay in good standing with the university. The majority of documents must be submitted by September 15th each year.

These include the following:

- ⇒ Contact information for the faculty advisor
- ⇒ List of current officers
- ⇒ Roster of members

If the roster changes, it must be resubmitted by January 15th. The constitution must also be re-approved by the club and resubmitted to the Office of Student Life every 3 years, or as soon as changes are made. These documents can be submitted by simply emailing them to the Office of Student Life at [studentlife@bsu.edu](mailto:studentlife@bsu.edu) with the organization name in the email.

### **Recruiting Members**

There are a lot of activities that can be done to recruit new members. This is an important part of running a club, as a group cannot be effective without members.



The best way to recruit members is to be involved in the freshman activity fairs in the beginnings of fall and spring semesters. The Office of Student Life will send out an email to all student organization presidents when sign ups for the activity fairs are available, and spots are awarded at a first come, first serve basis. At these activity fairs, it is helpful to have some sort of display to draw people in, a sign up sheet so that new people can be added to email lists, and some sort of take away for interested students, such as a website address, email, or meeting place and time.

There are other opportunities to recruit throughout the year. Any opportunity to sit at a booth outside an event is an excellent recruitment opportunity. The best way to find these opportunities is to read Ball State emails about upcoming events, and emailing event staff to find out how to get involved. One consistent booth opportunity is hosting an activity room at Late Nite. Other ideas include participating in pre-shows for drama productions, and other community events.

One of the most effective recruitment efforts is the direct ask. This can be done easily in dorms, in classes, and among friends. Direct asks can also be done to other clubs. This involves making contact with the leaders of other organizations, and requesting to come to their meeting to speak about your own club.

The main point to remember while recruiting members is that while it is important to not deviate from your mission and goals in an attempt to draw students in, it is also important to frame issues in a way that resonates with the average student's values and concerns (Doh and Dahan). For many students, particularly those who are new to an issue, seeing the relation between an issue and their own lives is directly related to their desire to get involved.

### **Communication**

One of the core factors in a successful organization is its ability to communicate. Clear communication between members and from the leadership to the members is vital to having members who are informed and who feel valued by the organization.

Communication includes a variety of formats. When speaking of communication, one could be discussing the way in which members speak to another, or can include the way that information is disseminated.

One way communication methods are those in which information is distributed to organization members from group leadership. This can take the form of emails regarding meeting times and plans, posting from an administrator account on to social media sites, and sharing decisions with group members at meetings.



All official student groups have access to their own university email account. Username Request forms can be acquired from the Student life office and from page 42 of the student organization handbook.

Student groups may also request a mail box through the Student Center. All groups are required to have a mailing address, and having a box in the student center will be easier to maintain than using an individual student box and changing frequently. Student Center mailboxes are free of charge, and can be requested by emailing [studentlife@bsu.edu](mailto:studentlife@bsu.edu). These boxes must be checked weekly.

The form that one way communication takes is what Shaw defined as a communication network in 1978 (Levi). A centralized network is one in which information is passed down through a hierarchy. An example of this is a group president who makes a decision and informs the secretary, who then emails everyone about the change. This type of network is very accurate, as everyone receives the same message at the same time. However, it is also extremely limited in its ability to respond to the needs and questions of the group. A decentralized network is one in which information passes freely among group members and in all directions. This type of communication network allows group members to feel more autonomy and more involved in group activity. It is also slow and inaccurate, as messages may skip members, and may become confused and altered as they travel through the group.

Two way communication is where information passes both from leadership down and among group members. This type of communication happens when people respond to emails, interact on social media, and hold discussions at meetings.

Both one way and two way communication is important to having informed members who feel valued.

When communicating it is important to remember that there is no guarantee that everyone is on the same page. In order to have clear communication, having common terminology is important. Organizations often utilize jargon that is specific to their cause. Common definitions that are discussed by the group ensure that everyone knows what is being discussed.

It is also important to be sure that everyone feels safe in meetings and when communicating outside of meetings. In order for people to open up and share their thoughts and feelings, they need to feel that they are in a safe and supportive environment (Levi). Feelings of vulnerability can prohibit people from truly communicating.

So far we've discussed internal communication methods. Groups must also consider their external communication methods. Some groups will have no need for external communication. However, in order to hold any sort of event, or to recruit new members, it is important to know how to communicate externally with the greater campus.

### **Advertising**

One method of external communication is through advertisement. There are many ways to spread information through the school. Flyers can be used to advertise for normal meetings, to hold an educational campaign, or to advertise for a specific event.

Flyers can be hung from a variety of community bulletin boards, located at the scramble light, across the street from the Art Museum on Riverside, and between Noyer and the Whiting Business Building. Bulletin boards inside buildings are assigned to departments. Flyers can be hung on these boards with the permission of the corresponding department. Flyers can be hung throughout the dorms by emailing the flyer and request to Cathy Bickel at [cbickel@bsu.edu](mailto:cbickel@bsu.edu) or Peggie Love at [plove@bsu.edu](mailto:plove@bsu.edu). Flyers and posters can also be brought to them in LaFollette N-13. If you choose to drop them off instead of emailing, you will need 70 copies, which allocates two copies per resident hall. If approved, they will take care of posting the flyers.

All written communications that are distributed to non-group members on campus must include the name of the organization and its contact information.

Flyers can be passed out by hand. One common location to pass out flyers is at the scramble light. In order to do this, the scramble light must be reserved through the Student Center Reservation Office. Fliers cannot be hung on doors, light posts, or on any university property other than the common bulletin boards. They also cannot be put in mailboxes unless they are addressed.

Organizations are allowed to use the Cardinal Copy Center in AJ 247 (**or RB 160- conflicting info in handbook**) to make copies and to print flyers and information. Payment can be made with cash, debit card, or a university financial account. Colored paper costs around 6 cents per page.

Information can also be distributed through email to all students through the Events This Week calendar. Submissions to this weekly email can be sent through the submission form found here: <http://www.bsu.edu/forms/studentlife/eventssubmit/>. The email is sent to all students each Wednesday, and submissions must be received by Tuesday at 5:00pm. Submissions have a maximum of 75 words, and events cannot include regular meetings.

Events can also be submitted to the Student Life Events Calendar through a submission here:

<http://www.bsu.edu/forms/studentlife/submitevent/>.

Events can be posted to the Communication Center calendar and emails through this link:

<https://apps.bsu.edu/communicationscenteradmin>. The Communication Center has an video that explains this process here: <http://www.bsu.edu/web/news/trainingvideo/>. When using the Communication Center tools, and any time the internet is used for club activities, it is important to refer to the Information Technology User Privileges and Responsibilities document: <http://cms.bsu.edu/-/media/WWW/DepartmentalContent/SecurityServices/Policies%20and%20Procedures%202012/Information%20Technology%20Users%20Privileges%20and%20Responsibilities%20%20New%20Page%20Layout.pdf>.

An important rule regarding advertising on campus is that writing with sidewalk chalk anywhere on campus property is against the rules and will have repercussions to the organization or individual using chalk.

Although it might sound like a good idea to advertise for philanthropic events throughout Muncie, there are rules against advertising off campus for philanthropic events.



### Stages of Group Development

One of the most widely recognized models of group development is Tuckman's stages of development, first published in 1977 (Levi). There are five stages in Tuckman's model: Forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning. Groups first form, then "storm", or brainstorm ideas and begin to plan out action, then "norm", or begin to settle in to a routine with standards of behavior for members. They then "perform" the actions decided on during brainstorming, and once the project is completed, they adjourn.

According to Feldman in 1984, norms, or the standards of behavior within groups, serve four main purposes (Levi). Norms allow members to express their core values, establish a common identity as a group, define appropriate behavior, and create a distinctive personal identity. These norms are developed over time by the group through mutual influence. Each group member contributes to developing norms, whether they are conscious of it or not.

Group norms promote cohesion. Group cohesion involves individuals developing pride in their identity as a group member. Groups whose members accept the goals and norms of the group are more cohesive, as many problems related to group functioning are avoided. While cohesion is generally a good thing, it can spur a group to make decisions based on group cohesion and agreement instead of making a decision that may be unpopular but needed (Levi).



This model of group development describes how group members develop within a group in relation to each other. Group members can also develop in relation to the goal or mission of a group, as they learn more about the cause or as other factors of their lives develop in relation to the issue (Levi). As a group leader, it is important to keep an open mind when thinking of group members, and to remember that not all members are in the group for the same reason, or are on the same level of commitment to an idea or cause.

### **Evaluation**

Central to communication and to group development is the ability to effectually evaluate the group. Evaluation can lead to knowing what changes need to be made, and a knowledge of what is good about an organization. Evaluation should be done at least once a semester, if not more. Evaluation can take the form of a formal anonymous survey or an open discussion, or any other method that allows group members to provide feedback on what they like and don't like about a group.

### **Discipline and Appeal.**

As we are discussing the requirements of an organization to stay active and in good standing, it is also important to discuss the discipline and appeal process. The student organization handbook has a very extensive explanation of these processes from pages 34-37. <http://>

[cms.bsu.edu/-/media/WWW/DepartmentalContent/Student%20Life/Handbook%20%20Student%20Organization%20Handbook%20updated%209%202013.pdf](https://cms.bsu.edu/-/media/WWW/DepartmentalContent/Student%20Life/Handbook%20%20Student%20Organization%20Handbook%20updated%209%202013.pdf).

### Conclusion

There are many ways that an organization can gain members. While working to recruit new people, it is important to be aware of the rules on campus so that your organization does not lose privileges before it can get off the ground.

The work isn't over once your group has been established on campus. It takes a lot of work to ensure that it lasts.

Aside from holding meetings that are interesting and staging activities that people want to attend, it is important that group leaders know how to run a safe space. Groups that are organized and well run are more likely to attract and more importantly, keep members.

### **Leadership styles**

Much research exists surrounding what makes a good leader. One idea is that leaders have certain traits that make leading natural to them- or at least makes leading easier. These traits tend to circle around energy and perception of other people's feelings. According to trait-based leadership, leaders are dominant, extroverted, interpersonally sensitive, and enthusiastic (Zastrow). Other interpretations of trait approach point out that different traits will be required for different leadership positions, and that each group will need to choose it's leader based on what best suits their organization's needs.

Another theory of leadership is that good leaders must be charismatic (Zastrow). This is a debatable theory, for many reasons. For one thing, charisma is not easily defined.

For another, many non-charismatic people make perfectly good leaders. It also can be difficult to say whether a leader has been charismatic all along, or if that charisma has developed as the leader builds up rapport with the group.

Another common theory of leadership is the position approach (Zastrow). This idea is that the title is what makes a person a leader. Anyone can do the job of a leader, given the clearly defined roles and expectations that come with the title, or so says this approach. This theory of leadership allows groups to put people in to power based on potential, to allow them the chance to grow skills from the ground. It might pass over those who are more qualified in favor of those who could gain the most in terms of personal skills from a position.

Lewin, Lippitt, and White offer another framework for discussing leadership styles. In this framework there are three types of leadership, based on decision making style: authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire. The authoritarian leader makes all choices, and tolerates no other sources of leadership within the group. The democratic leader encourages input from the whole group in each decision, and allows that input to shape the group's momentum. The laissez-faire leader allows the group to drive itself, putting little or no direction in to it.

Another type of group leadership is the distributed functions approach (Zastrow). In this approach leadership is broken down in to tasks that are distributed throughout the

group. Tasks rotate, and no one person is put in complete control or in control of the same task for too long. This style requires strong group cohesion from the beginning, and allows each member to develop strong skills in a variety of situations.

Not all roles within groups must be clearly defined leadership roles. Formal leadership positions often fill task roles. Task roles are spaces for group members to ensure that the group accomplishes its goals. Other, less formal and often undervalued roles are maintenance roles. Individuals who fulfill maintenance roles ensure that the relationships within the group are strong and that the group is cohesive. Task oriented members get things done, while maintenance oriented members make sure everyone feels good about what has been accomplished. Both roles are important to effective group functioning.

### **Conflict resolution**

Before addressing the topic of conflict resolution, it is important to note two facts:

1. Conflict is normal.
2. Conflict can be both internal and external.

To most people, conflict is to be avoided, especially in groups. However, conflict is not necessarily a negative occurrence. It can bring about growth, innovation, and creativity (Levi,

Zastrow). So long as discussion stays calm and rational, conflict can solve problems and create stronger bonds within the organization.

Group conflict doesn't need to mean infighting among group members, and it doesn't need to mean warring with another organization on the opposite side of the political spectrum. Conflict can mean either of those; it can be a combination. Conflict by definition is any discord of action, feeling, or effect. That can add up to a wide variety of possibilities.

As the definition of conflict is wide, it is important to be open minded and wary when assessing problems. Open conflict can have many sources and causes, and it is important to understand who feels the conflict and who has a stake in the solution before proceeding with attempting to fix it. More importantly, it is important to understand the cause of the problem before any move is made to alleviate it (Levi).

The rational problem solving model (VanGundy, 1981, Zastrow) provides an excellent framework for solving problems, both for internal and external problems. This model has 7 steps. The first is to recognize the problem or conflict. This makes perfect sense, as no problem can be solved while denying that it exists. The second step is to define the problem. In order to find a solution that all parties can agree on, they must first agree with



the problem itself. Many conflicts can be solved with this step. A simple definition of a problem forces both parties to understand what the other is saying.

The third step is to analyze the problem. This is a continuation of the previous step. Once the problem is clearly defined, all parties involved must be able to fully rationalize their interpretation of the cause of the problem. Only by agreeing on a cause will a solution be made clear.

The fourth step is to generate possible solutions through brainstorming, the fifth is to choose a solution, and the sixth to implement it. If all parties have worked together, then the solution may be successful. If not, then the lack of communication will continue to pull at relations. Once the solution has been implemented, the seventh step is to assess the success of the effort. If the solution was not successful, then the problem solvers return to the 4th step and choose a new solution to attempt.

Possible sources of trouble for potential problem solvers are poor definitions of the problem that the parties involved do not have a common understanding of, poor communication, lack of resources to implement the solution, and lack of motivation (Zastrow)

Another framework for problem solving is using the No-Lose framework (Zastrow). This method is similar to the rational problem solving model. It begins with each side of the problem identifying their needs and complains, then move s to generating alternatives. The stakeholders then evaluate all the possibilities and decide together on the most acceptable solution, and discuss the implementation of it. The proposed solution is then implemented and evaluated to gauge satisfaction by all parties.

### **Holding Productive Meetings**

When planning activities and running meetings, it is important to have a balance of productivity and enjoyment. If people aren't enjoying meetings, they are less likely to show up to a group voluntarily. At the same time, it is important that people feel their time is being used well.

Gersick defines this as having punctuated equilibrium. Well executed punctuated equilibrium involves periods of low activity, periods full of energy and change, a midpoint crisis, followed by a period of focus and activity (Levi). The end result is a completed project, and members of a group who do not feel overworked, but content with work put in and a completed project.

## Decision making

Making decisions within a group can sometimes be a complicated task. It is good to have a determined method for making choices. Different methods of decision making exist on a continuum of responsibility (Levi). On the far end, one person holds all responsibility and authority and chooses for the group. On the other end, the group makes choices only by complete consensus. Points between these two extremes include majority and complex majority votes, delegating decisions, and committee decisions. The method that is best for each group is dependent on group size and the time available for making a decision.

Before making a decision, particularly when the decision making style is closer to the whole group side of the responsibility continuum, discussion will be a part of the process. Discussion allows a group to evaluate options and outcomes. Having a time limit on discussion will prevent discussion from taking over the process (Zastrow). While discussion is valuable in providing more brainpower and ideas, there is also a danger of "groupthink" occurring.

Groupthink is when group discussion is governed by social pressure. Participants feel invincible and are able to rationalize risk due to the perceived agreement of the rest of the group (Zastrow). Regardless of the importance of the decision being made, care must always be taken to avoid the pitfalls of groupthink.

### Finances

All recognized student organizations are eligible to have a free bank account through the Ball State Federal Credit Union DOUBLE CHECK. To sign up for this account, simply email [studentlife@bsu.edu](mailto:studentlife@bsu.edu) or stop by the Student Life Office to ask for one. It takes one week to process. Both the Office of Student Life and the Controller's Office also offer free accounting advice by appointment for any student organization with questions. In addition, organizations with bank accounts can have a free audit once a year. An audit may help an organization to check their accuracy in accounting and to remain accountable for funds.

### How to Deposit Money in a University Account

- ⇒ Fill out a Cash Receipts Voucher
- ⇒ Bring cash or check to Bursar's Office

ATTENTION: If you're carrying more than \$1,000, bring money to the Office of Student Life for a locked bag and a police escort

- ⇒ Endorse back of check with "-for deposit only"
- ⇒ Turn in forms!

### How to be Reimbursed for funds from a University Account

- ⇒ Fill out a Banner Direct Pay form.
- ⇒ Get voucher signed by your advisor and the Office of Student Life

- ⇒ Bring signed form and original, itemized receipt to the Office of Student Life
- ⇒ Reimbursement will be sent out in two weeks.

When submitting paperwork for reimbursement be sure to include original receipts with each item purchased listed. Keep in mind that nothing that passes through university accounts is tax deductible, and that University Accounts cannot pay for sales tax.

### **Fundraising**

Fundraising is often an important part of organization activity. Money raised by organizations can be used to host activities, to cover travel costs, or to donate to a worthy cause. There are a lot of rules governing what is permissible during fundraising.

In order to sell any food, an organization must have a Temporary Food Permit from Charlie Scoefield. Only pre-wrapped and store bought items may be sold, and no outside vendors may sell food through an organization. An organization may only have a Temporary Food Permit once per semester. These permits may not be used in any place where Ball State Food Service is available. A permit must be acquired 14 days prior to an event.

Student Organizations may not sell products of a commercial firm, unless those products are part of a larger event, or the commercial firm does not gain anything, including publicity, from the event.

Lotteries and raffles are not allowed. Corporations may donate money to organizations to sponsor a specific program or activity, but may not donate money for unspecified causes. No fundraising may be done door to door in resident halls or university apartments, and faculty may not be solicited for donations.

### SGA Co-Sponsorship

A great opportunity for student organizations hoping to hold a campus wide event is to seek co-sponsorship from the Student Government Association (SGA). The SGA has a fund each year that it allocates for use by recognized student organizations. One important thing to note about this fund is that money awarded through the co-sponsorship process is disbursed after the event. All costs of the event must be paid for up front by the organization and it's members, and then will be paid back by SGA under the agreements of their funding contract. SGA will not reimburse sales tax.

The committee that approves funding requests meets weekly during the academic year, beginning in mid October. Any requests for events occurring before October must be



submitted in the beginning of the previous April. In order to submit an application for funding, your organization must have a current roster on file in the Office of Student Life. Submit the form online with an itemized budget and an explanation of the event and how the event will benefit students or the university. You must also have the date, location, and contact person prepared in order to apply. The form is available here: <http://www.bsu.edu/forms/studentlife/sgacosponsor/>. The application must be submitted 30 days prior to an event for requests of less than \$1,000 and 60 days for requests above that.

SGA has the right to fund your request fully, partially, or not at all. The contact person you listed in the application form will receive an email from the SGA treasurer with their decision.

There are several reasons that SGA would choose not to fund your event. SGA does not provide sponsorship for student organizations that are not recognized by the Office of Student Life. Sponsorship cannot be used for sports events, charity donations, travel, funding events that have already occurred, events where alcohol is present, apparel, gift cards, legislative lobbying, partisan politics, compensation to members, or for personal gain of any student or employee of Ball State.

Events featuring speakers or performers must have a contract with the Office of Student Life 3 weeks before the event is to occur. Student organizations are not permitted to supply their

own contract, but must go through the university. In addition, SGA will not sponsor any speaker who does not have a social security number.

If your event is awarded sponsorship, you have several obligations to SGA. SGA requires recognition in all marketing and media distributed throughout campus. Anything printed must be done through the Cardinal Copy Center in RB 160, and must include the SGA logo. If the event includes a Ball State Food Service catering order, that order must be placed at least 8 days prior to the event. All events with SGA sponsorship must be free to students, although donations may be collected. Any changes to the original budget over \$50 must be reported immediately to SGA.

After the event two things must be turned in to the SGA Treasurer. All original receipts must be submitted to the Treasurer in SC 112A within 7 days of the event. Without receipts SGA cannot reimburse your organization. After those are turned in, the organization must complete a Summary Report. Your organization will not be considered for future funding until this report is completed and turned in. This report can be found here: <http://cms.bsu.edu/-/media/WWW/DepartmentalContent/Student%20Life/SGA%20Co-sponsorship%20Report.pdf>.

## Events

Throughout the year, many student organizations put on events on campus for the benefit of the student body. There are many different purposes that an event might have. It might be a fundraiser for the club or for a cause; it might be an attempt to educate the community, or it draw attention to an issue; it might simply be to entertain students. Whatever the purpose of an event, there are many steps to pulling off an event.

Beyond the internal details of the event, there are many requirements from the university in order to have a successful event. Once a date has been chosen, space must be reserved through the university, any funding needs addressed, security secured if necessary, and the event advertised. Each of these tasks has separate rules within the university.

Once those details are squared away, the event planning continues. Other things to consider are collaborating with other groups, delegation and communication on the day of the event, set up and tear down, thank yous and reports, and reflection within the group.

Before beginning to plan an event, make sure that your current roster is up to date with the Office of Student Life. Without a current roster, many campus services will not be available to you. To submit a roster ,simply email the name of the organization, advisor, and current members to [studentlife@bsu.edu](mailto:studentlife@bsu.edu).

### Choosing a Date

When deciding on a date for an event, take in to consideration both the needs of the organization and the needs of the campus community. In addition to choosing a time when group members are available to attend and to work, it is also important to choose a time when students are free. Depending on the event, this might mean holding events at night, or during lunch hours. When choosing a date make sure to view the University Calendar and the Priority Date calendar through the Office of Student Life to avoid scheduling your event during another event that might prevent students from attending. Events cannot be scheduled during finals week.

### Choosing and reserving space

To reserve a space for an event email Charlie Scofield at [cscofiel@bsu.edu](mailto:cscofiel@bsu.edu) with the date of the event, preferred space, expected number of people attending, equipment needs, and planned admission charge. This reservation must be made 2 days before a regular meeting, and at least a month prior to a large event. Some spaces charge fees to use, and have fees for both set up and clean up. Any details of a reservation will be discussed by Charlie Scofield.

Regardless of the details of the reservation, there are several rules that hold throughout campus. No fires are allowed in any building. Any decorations to be used in the Student

Center must be approved at the time of reservation due to fire code. No alcoholic beverages are allowed in any on campus event.

Any campus space is eligible for reservations except for residence halls and student apartments. This includes classrooms, picnic areas, athletic facilities, building atriums, Emens and Pruis, the scramble light, the quad, fields, and the patio behind the student center. If reservations are made at the Student Center, cancellations must be made 2 days before the event was to occur to avoid fees and loss of scheduling privileges.

Some specific rules apply to events that occur outside. Organizations that hold events outside must do their best to limit disturbances to classrooms, offices, and dorms, must protect university facilities, and see to the safety of participants. Any events that include loud noises may not occur on weekdays at 9pm, when classes end. Care must be taken to ensure that there are no more participants entering a space than is allowed by fire code.

### Flyers, Demonstrations, and Marches

There are some events that are classics in the repertoire of social justice groups. Passing out flyers, demonstrating, and marching fall under this category. Due to the oft-political nature of these events, there are specific rules in the student organization handbook that govern these events.

Any written material may be distributed outdoors by hand without prior university permission so long as there are no posters or tables used. Printed materials may not be fixed to any university structure, placed on vehicles, or put in mailboxes unaddressed.

Demonstrations may occur indoors in the Student Center, Emens, or Pruis, and require approval from the Vice President of Student Affairs and the Dean of Students at least 3 days prior to the event. They may occur outdoors as long as they remain 60 feet from any window of classrooms and offices and do not disrupt class, research, or office activity. Care must be taken to not block any doors or building exits. If more than 50 people are expected to attend, the space must be requested from Charlie Scofield and permission must be granted from the Vice President of Student Affairs and the Dean of Students. Demonstrations of more than 50 students occurring outdoors must take place on LaFollette field or the Quad.

Marches may take place for the purpose of expressing student sentiment or to raise awareness for a cause. They must be scheduled at least 3 days prior to the event with Charlie Scofield. Care must be taken to not block traffic.

If any demonstration or march involves creating a structure, it must be built on the Quad or LaFollette Field, not interfere with traffic or orderly conduct, contain no obscenity or



defamation, not be a threat to the health or safety of students, and be taken down within ten days.

### Funding

Events can be funded through payment by group members or through funds in group accounts as described in the “funding” section above. They may also be funded through SGA co-sponsorship, as described previously. Events may also be sponsored by companies outside of the university, so long as the companies receive nothing in return, and the company is not an alcohol vendor or a bar.

### Security

Very large events and dances require security. The Office of Public Safety must be contacted 2 weeks before the event to arrange for security, and University Police must be contracted for large events. Working with University Police does not release the host organization from responsibility for the event. The organization must plan to meet police officers 15 minutes before the start of the event, and to have a plan prepared to deal with any foreseeable problems. The organization must check out with the officers at the end of the event. The organization is responsible for paying the officers, and must submit a report to the Office of Student Life within 2 days of the event.

### Publicity

In order for an event to be a success, students must be aware that it is happening. Publicity for events could include posters, flyers, emails, posting on university calendars, social media, and word of mouth. See *section, page* for more details on requirements surrounding advertisements.

### Collaboration

Working with other student organizations is a good way to ensure a successful event. More hosting organizations will increase campus awareness and attendance, and will provide additional brainpower and manpower for planning and executing events. To collaborate with other campus groups, contact the leader of the desired partners to pitch the event, and be prepared to attend their meetings to answer questions. When partnering with other organizations, it is important to be aware of the needs and motivation of other groups, and to keep clear communication to ensure that all parties are aware of the proceedings and satisfied with the outcomes. It is also not a bad idea to draw up an informal contract so that each partner is aware of their role in the event.

Collaborating with off campus groups is more complicated. The rules regarding sponsorship are listed in the funding section. Any professional productions, defined as a performance involving anyone who is not a Ball State student, faculty, or staff, must be scheduled at

minimum ten days prior to the event. Contracts must be generated through the Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs and the Director of Student Life in SC 133. These contracts must be reviewed at least one month prior to any performance.

Students are allowed to invite guest speakers to campus, so long as the speakers do not urge the audience to take actions which are prohibited by the University or are illegal. In particular, “advocating or urging the modification of the government of the United States or of the State of Indiana by violence or sabotage is specifically prohibited”. If the speaker is being paid for through SGA co-sponsorship, a contract must be drawn through the university, and the speaker must be a United States citizen (see funding, *page*).

### General Planning Suggestions

When planning an event, keep in mind the goals of your organization. Your event should fit in to your organization’s mission, and should serve to advance your goals . A successful event has clearly defined outcomes prior to the event. Successful events also have a defined target audience. These must all be discussed and agreed on by all involved in planning.

Successful events have specific individuals with specific tasks. As so much of event planning involves completing tasks within a specific time frame, it is vital that each person involved knows their tasks and adheres to that time frame.

Planning groups should also decide on and adhere to a budget. This budget should identify the funds needed and the sources of funds to be used.

Event timelines should include detailed descriptions of the event day. The order of activities and the responsible party should be decided on and listed. This should include set up and tear down. Equipment must be identified and secured.

After an event, thanks should be sent to any party involved in the execution of the event, and any reports due to the University should be completed. The organization who hosted the event should dedicate time to reflect on the success of the event. They should discuss what went well, what did not, and what could be done differently. This information should be recorded and filed in organization records so that future organization members may reference it.

### Conclusion

Knowledge of group functioning will help an organization's leader to ensure that meetings progress well and that the group is able to achieve it's objectives. In addition to that knowledge, a working understanding of Ball State policies will allow groups to successfully plan meetings and events that will help to make their group effective.

In their writing on modern social movements, Doh and Dahan spoke of the “repertoire” of action groups. A “repertoire” is made up of the common set of actions that an activist group takes. This includes actions such as demonstrations, petitions, lobbying, and postering. So far we’ve discussed putting on events on campus for the benefit of the student body. This chapter will focus on activities that do more than raise awareness of issues.

Recognized university organizations cannot lobby, raise money or attention for political candidates, or participate in anything that might be construed as partisan politics. If you aren’t sure if your planned activities fall under those categories, contact the Office of Student Life.

Raising awareness of issues on campus is an important function of social justice groups. University campuses are full of young voters, after all. However, it can be very rewarding to spread your message and your passion outside of the university bubble.

Activities that fall into an action groups repertoire in this sense include monitoring legislation and contacting legislators, providing testimony for the legislative process and attending rallies, going to professional conferences, and finding mentors.



### Monitoring Legislation

The internet makes monitoring bills easy. Bills originating in the senate can be found at [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov), and those from the house at [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov), and both are listed through [THOMAS.gov](http://THOMAS.gov) and [congress.gov](http://congress.gov). Policies coming from the Indiana state government can be found at [www.iga.in.gov](http://www.iga.in.gov).

In addition to contacting the correct legislative body at the correct level of government, it is important to look at who is directly involved with the bill. On all three websites for the individual houses you can search under the “legislation” tab for bills alphabetically by topic. Through this you can read details of each bill related to your focus area.

Once you find a relevant bill, check it’s status. If it is already on the floor of the legislature it would be easiest to contact only your own representative. If, however, the bill is still in committee, you can contact those committee members and present them with your opinion and specialized knowledge.

Committee members are supposed to be knowledgeable in the topics that are presented to them in committee meetings. We all know that this is not always the case, though. All members of each committee are listed under “committee” tabs on the websites listed above. Also listed should be schedules for when the committee will discuss each bill. It could be worthwhile to



travel to the statehouse to listen to the hearings, meet with individual legislators, or potentially to testify for or against a bill.

### **Writing to legislators**

Thanks in many parts to technology, contacting your representative to share your opinion is easier than ever. Contact information for all public officials is listed online. Depending on the timeline and on your own personal preference, you can call, email, or write a letter to any person in office. There are a few important considerations to keep in mind when deciding who to contact. Is the policy or bill in question stemming from the federal or state government? Which house is it in? Is it still in committee, or has it made it to the floor? How much time is there before it will be called up? The answers to each of these questions should help to determine who you contact and how you contact them.

#### What to say when you contact your representative:

⇒ Be Formal

A person who spells words correctly and uses proper grammar is more likely to be paid attention to than someone who doesn't. Informal language in politics makes a person sound less intelligent. End of story.

⇒ Be Polite

Similarly, derogatory words and vulgarities will get you nowhere in life. Even if you don't agree with who you are writing to, show them respect. They're people too, after all.

### ⇒ Be Informed

If you want to influence someone, you have to know what you're talking about. Do your research. Do research on your research. It never hurts to cross-check your facts, and to check who is writing and funding what you're reading. Be smart about what you're repeating!

### ⇒ Be Concise

Legislators are busy people. Don't waste their time with long winded stories.

### ⇒ Introduce Yourself

As a constituent, your representative represent *you*. Let them know who you are, and why they should listen to you.

### ⇒ Introduce the Topic

What are you talking about? Present the information that you know. This is where your research comes in. Facts are very subjective statements; where did yours come from? Cite reliable sources if you are able to.

Lay out what legislation is currently being debated that relates to your topic, or summarize what has been done in the past. This further shows your rep. that you do know what you're talking about.

⇒ Make your argument

What do you want your rep. to do about this issue, and why? What about your opinion makes it more valid than other opinions? Do you have any personal experience with this that makes you an expert? Or, how would this legislation affect your life? How would it affect others? Why is this the best plan of action?

Summarize your argument, and thank your rep. for taking the time to read your letter

⇒ Sign it!

Make sure you include your full name and address, so they know that you're a real person and in their district.

If, like many college students, you live away from home and are writing to a legislator that does not represent your district, you can still explain to them why your opinion matters. For example, if you wanted to write to a legislator against a proposed policy, you might explain how that policy would impact college students or soon to be graduates on the whole.

## **Testifying**

Anyone is allowed to testify before Indiana's congress and in committee hearings with the intention of sharing their experiences in relation to proposed legislation. Hearing schedules are posted on the home page of the Indiana General Assembly web page. Anyone who wishes to testify who needs assistance through the use of an interpreter or ASL signer must notify their statehouse 14 days in advance.

Testifying before the U.S Congress is more complicated. As the U.S. Congress clearly represents more people, there are more people wishing to testify for any given issue. To this end, an invitation must be issued to you in order to testify. When hearing schedules are announced, a person who wishes to testify should contact their legislator to let them know that they are a content expert and wish to speak.

When testifying, it is important that you remain clear and concise. Legislators do not have a lot of time. Have your presentation written down and be prepared to share it with the legislature before presenting. Ask legislators in advance what the questions will be in order to be prepared with answers.

**Attending rallies**

One fun way for an organization to involve themselves in local and national politics is to attend rallies. Many national organizations hold rallies around the country at different points throughout the year. Grassroots organizations also hold rallies frequently as a way to show local legislators the number of people who feel passionately about an issue. By searching relevant organizations you can find out in advance when rallies might be in order to have time to arrange travel. The success of rallies often depends on the number of people involved, and are a great way to support a cause as a student. Students are often able to attend rallies more easily than adults with strict full time employment, and so rallies are sometimes dependent on student involvement.

**Attending conferences**

Another great way to become involved in the world of advocacy is to attend conferences. There are many types of conferences: political gatherings and conventions; gatherings of professionals; university sponsored panels, and more. Each of these types of conferences offer opportunities to learn more about what other people in the community are doing and to meet people doing similar work. Conferences are invaluable for networking and for learning best practices and new points of view.

Conferences can be found through searching the calendars of different universities, and by checking the events pages on websites of national and local grassroots organizations.

### **Traveling as a group**

Anytime members of a group are traveling together for purposes of group activity three separate forms must be submitted to the Office of Student Life. These forms are due at least three days before the event, and are available here: <http://cms.bsu.edu/campuslife/studentlife/studentorgs/currentorgs/travel-forms>

### **Finding a mentor**

A step in group development that can completely revitalize a group is the finding of a mentor. A mentor is a professional who is able and willing to interact with your group in order to help guide you through different situations.

Mentors can be found in many ways. Mentors might be professors of yours, of professors in other related departments. Anyone with experience related to your group's goals could be a possible mentor. Other sources of mentors are conferences, where people committed to the same topic convene to discuss advancing the cause, and other companies or agencies that participate in that work. Mentors must have expertise and must be willing to commit time to helping the group.



## Community Service

An invaluable activity that campus groups can complete is community service. Muncie has many resources available for groups that wish to aid the community. The most obvious of these is Student Voluntary Services (SVS). The SVS website has a database for students to search and sign up for community service opportunities. <http://cms.bsu.edu/campuslife/svs/svsdatabase>

Not all local organizations are involved with SVS. The Schafer Leadership Academy hosts a volunteer job board with United Way of Delaware County called CONVERGE. This is another good tool for students wishing to become involved in their community. <http://www.shafferleadership.com/converge/>.

Each year Kathy Smith, the Associate Director of SVS puts together an audit of student organization's community service as a way to measure the impact that Ball State Students have on the community. Any organization is invited to send her information on their collective hours at the end of the spring semester.

Conclusion

Advocating as a student organization does not limit you to activities within campus. Exploring the resources of your community and the actions of non-student activists can help prepare you for life after graduation and help build skills that will lead to a lifetime of activism.

Despite how we might feel about it, at some point college will end and we will all move in to the real world, where campus organizations are replaced with informal groups and national organizations. Whether you are graduating soon or have time to spare still, are leaving school for another reason or have found it necessary to leave your organization, the truth remains that at some point you will need to leave. Before doing this it is important to consider how the group will continue to function without you, and to address how you will continue to be an activist without your group.

### **Walking away from your organization**

Leading a group is hard. Whether you were the founder of a group or its president, doubtlessly you spent many hours planning out meetings, recruiting members, and involving your group in campus activities. It can be scary to take a step back and allow the group to evolve without you.

In the best case scenario, there will be excited, capable younger students who want to take on leadership roles in your organization. In this case, it is best to allow them their freedom to lead as they wish, while still offering support and advice. It may be hard to accept, but once you leave the group or leave the university, the group will have no ties to you.

There is another, less desirable, possible situation. There is a chance that no one will be willing to step up and take a leadership role. In that case, there is nothing you can do but disband your group quietly at the end of the semester. With the amount of work that leading a group takes, it isn't feasible to attempt to force leadership on to someone who does not wish to assume it.

Your group may fall somewhere between these two extremes; there may be students who wish to lead that you feel are not right for the group. To be short, this does not matter. If the group elects a leader whose ideals and goals are different than yours, that is a matter for the group. As mentioned previously, once you're done with the group, you have no influence on it. College campuses are constantly changing, and campus organizations must reflect the needs and desires of its student body.

Regardless of what route your group takes, it is important to take some time as a group to reflect on your goals and on your accomplishments. Discuss what people enjoyed about your organization and what they would do differently. Not only does this help you as a leader see where you might have made different choices, it also allows group members to process their feelings on the end of the group.

As mentioned previously, college campuses are continually changing. Every year a group will have different members with different goals. It is important to recognize this change, as it will affect how the group runs in the future.

A group sharing activity may benefit organization members. A group activity that is somewhat serious and gives every member a chance to share their feelings gives members a chance to share how they feel and to feel valued by other members of the group.

At the end of the semester the Office of Student Life will send out an email reminding organizations to submit information about the next year's leadership to the office so that groups can continue to function once past leaders have left campus. This information can be sent at any time to [studentlife@bsu.edu](mailto:studentlife@bsu.edu). If the organization will not be continuing in to the next year, it would be easier on the office staff to alert them to this at this time. Group information will remain in the Student Organization Database on the chance that someone wishes to reinstate the group in the future.

### **Personal Reflection**

Processing your feelings about an experience is important to finding closure. Campus groups become a part of our identity, particularly for leadership or for those involved for long periods of time. Losing that identity after college can be difficult to deal with. Therefore, taking time



to reflect on the skills learned, friends made, and experiences and mistakes made is vital to retaining a healthy mindset.

Making the transition to life after college is difficult. Making that transition after a college career full of campus involvement can be especially challenging. The world outside of campus doesn't have an office of adult life where one can learn about organizations to join, or find people with similar interests. Instead it is up to the individual to seek out those opportunities.

For a formerly active college student, there are many avenues for finding organizations and groups to pour energy in to. There may be national organizations that tie in to issues you feel passionately about. There might also be local groups that do advocacy work. In order to find either, social media is a wonderful tool for searching and connecting with like-minded people. Conferences also offer opportunities to connect with people with similar mindsets.

The lack of a formal framework for organizations that colleges provide does not mean that there cannot be new organizations formed after college. Hopefully the tools and skills discussed in this manual will be helpful to anyone who wants to form a group to advocate for a cause they are passionate about.



## Conclusion

Participation in student organizations allow students to experience more than just classwork while in school. They promote lasting friendships and allow students to develop leadership skills and provide opportunities for students to work together. Social justice organizations provide additional benefits to students in allowing them to foster skills that they can use for the rest of their lives. Civic engagement is vital to the democratic process. Without citizens who know how to be informed and how to advocate for their beliefs, the democratic process would fall apart. Student leaders who work to run social justice organizations are not only fighting for specific causes, but are fighting to provide a future generation of activists and active participants in the world.

Americans pride themselves on their democratic system, and through must of America's work throughout the world, wish to see democracy such as ours available to people in other countries. Yet, according to a publication by the National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (2012), out of the 172 democratic countries in the world, the United States ranks 139th in voter participation. A recent study showed statistically that the opinions of average citizens have ceased to matter in American politics (Gilens and Page, 2014).

Each election year effort is put out by various organizations to "Get Out the Vote" or to "Rock the Vote", or any other number of catchy slogans aimed to encourage young people to vote. Despite that, only 41.2% of eligible voters aged 19-24 voted in 2012, a decline since the previous election (Taylor and Lopez, 2013). For elections that occur without a presidential race, the statistics are even lower.

While the numbers around traditional civic engagement, voter turnout, remains low for young people, community engagement is high. According to data collected in 2010, 8 in 10 college seniors engaged in some form of community service during their time in college (The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012). While young people and students may not exercise their rights as citizens to vote, they are not completely without hope for the future. According to a study by Metzger and Smetana, participation in civic activities, which includes service work, is associated with holding beliefs such as social trust and positive beliefs about people (Metzger and Smetana, 2010). The ideas presented by these

researchers are encouraging, considering that half of all states do not require civic education to graduate high school (The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012).

The image of young people today that the media presents to us is one of self centered kids who cannot function without their smartphones, to busy taking selfies to care about their neighbors. The reality is far from that. In a study on social networks and civic engagement, researchers saw that the internet allows young people to form patterns of civic engagement based on personal interests, to seek out relevant information, to share that information and to promote calls to action (Bennett, Freelon, and Wells, 2010).

If students are not taught how their government works, are not taught the importance of voting, then they cannot be held at fault for not engaging traditionally in the political system. The statistics shared above show that young people do want to be involved, and find ways to engage themselves in their communities and in the issues that they find relevant. According to the same study by Metzger and Smetana, AMericans who are involved civically do so not out of obligation to the system, but to a belief that they have a responsibility to contribute to the common good. It also increases trust, views of collective efficacy, and feelings of inclusiveness in the community (2010). Thus, when older generations grumble over the lack of caring exhibited by the younger ones, it is clear that while young people may not follow the path that their elders paved for them, that does not mean that they have abandoned the road entirely.

The manual for student social justice organizations was written with the intent of facilitating civic engagement in student. The rules and regulations around student activities can be difficult to locate. Through my research I often found several regulations for the same activity located in different places throughout the university website. This was my attempt to create one material that student activists could use to know their rights and responsibilities within the context of student organizations.

Student organizations face many problems without the added complications of complicated rules. The cyclical nature of the university system makes it difficult to maintain a stable organization, and the wide variety of choices in extracurriculars often takes from what time would be available to students to engage in their community (Pauli, 2011).

The existence of student political groups allows students to find order and conflict resolution in normally conflict-laden topics. Within developmental theory this is viewed as a way for people to find peace in ambiguous and uncertain moments (McIntosh and Youniss, 2010). The skills that students can develop in social justice activism groups are important to both their civic skills and to their personal development.

Social justice activism groups allow students to “integrate theory and practice in teaching advocacy skills; find their voice, find comfort in working with community, develop communication skills, collaboration skills, gain comfort with ambiguity and reality, and have less anxiety about real world” (Reiff and Keene, 2012). Activism groups provide great opportunities for students to gain skills for civic life, and for all areas of life. According to

McIntosh and Youniss, a “politically able person operates in public, recognizes his or her own interests, can promote them in the face of competing interest, knows his or her place within a larger sphere of ideologies, and identifies with the democratic political system, which allows diverse views to interact according to agreed upon rules” (McIntosh and Youniss, 2010).

I put together the guide to student groups in the framework of a logic model. Each piece of student organization logically follows the next. The sections are ordered by how each piece would be needed in the chronological life of the group, in the hope that the information is easy to follow and to find.

I could not have written this guide had I not gone through the process alongside the manual. I composed the sections one step behind where my own club was, each based on what knowledge would have made my own path easier to walk, had I known the information prior to beginning the process of forming a club. It could be said that I wrote this guide in the hope that people could learn from my mistakes.

My own leap in to student activism began in high school, under the influence of a Ms. Joan Davis. Ms. Davis was a teacher in the social studies department who resembled every stereotype of hippie that could be thought of. Her classroom was papered in protest posters, and she regularly shared her stories of attending Kent State in 1970, and of her husband's experiences attempting to evade the draft during Vietnam. As a freshman in her classroom, I couldn't wait to get to college, to take part in protests and marches.



When I got to Ball State then, it was with some disappointment that I found the small segment of the student body engaged in social activism. It was unrealistic to expect more of a fraction of the student body to care passionately about current events and social issues. More specifically, it was unrealistic to expect riots and protests when often even simple discussion is beyond the range of college student's activities. Research on student civic engagement shows that "student politics is almost always a minority phenomenon, generally involving only a small segment of the student body, and tends to be concentrated in large, quality schools" (Pauli, 2011). This is not to say that students at Ball State don't care about politics; it is to point out that my idea of college was based on stories of "large, quality schools" in the 1970's, at the height of student activism.

Disappointment in check, I set my sights lower. If we couldn't have demonstrations and protests, I could settle for a club, a place where like-minded people could at least discuss the need for social justice.

For three years I waited for the student organization representing my political ideas to materialize. In the beginning, there were a several ideals that I could have joined a group to support. By my second year in school, I had honed my attention on one particular issue: Reproductive Justice.

Reproductive justice is the idea that everyone deserves the opportunity to build the family that they desire; to not be forced to have children that aren't wanted, and to have those that are; to have access to the information and resources that they need to create and



raise their children; to marry who they want to marry, to live without fear, to not have their children taken from them. Reproductive justice believes in people and in families.

Reproductive justice is a framework for understanding that choice is about more than just abortion, that until all people are able to choose their families, access to abortion is only a talking point for a privileged few. It is about examining stereotypes, about being intersectional in our thinking. It is about living the quote, “feminism that does not include everybody isn’t feminism”.

There are a lot of student organizations, and for a while I thought that perhaps I had overlooked an organization that was pro-choice and pro-family. It wasn’t until I took a 300 level policy class with Ms. Shelley in the social work department that I began to consider forming my own group. Ms. Shelley taught us how to identify problems, how to research solutions, how to implement a plan, and most importantly, how to regroup and start over when plans fell through. Ms. Shelley’s policy class was the beginning of my direct involvement with student organizations for social justice.

My club was called Students for Reproductive Justice. Our aim was to educate ourselves and the campus on issues related to reproductive justice, to create a forum for discussing issues, and to equalize the representation of these issues on campus.

I went through the planning documents provided by Student Life in May of 2013. I was sure that students would flock to a club centered on reproductive justice. Over the summer I drafted the constitution and prepared the Intent to Organize paperwork, and turned it in in

the first weeks of school. I expected the process to take a two weeks, maybe three. I wasn't aware then that the Student Activities Committee doesn't meet until October. I also wasn't aware that there were privileges that potential student organizations held while they waited.

For that reason, I formed an alliance with Feminists for Action. They allowed us to meet briefly in their room following their meetings, and those in attendance at my meetings were mostly also members of FA.

During those first few months we held educational meetings, discussed current events, and planned out potential events. We wrote cards to staff members at our local Planned Parenthood, where Students for Life and members of the Muncie community were protesting for 40 days of life, despite the fact that this clinic does not provide abortion. Along with FA, we counter protested the family that brought gruesome signs to campus, advocating against abortion.

We also began to plan a movie screening. Representatives from *After Tiller*, a Sundance film, agreed to bring the movie to Ball State. The movie was not going to be shown elsewhere in Indiana. We were honored that they were willing to work with us. *After Tiller* is a documentary about the only four doctors in the whole country who perform third trimester abortions, and the threats to their lives that this work entails.

Planning this event turned in to a tangled mess of priority dates and deadlines. We chose a date, and began discussing room reservations with Charlie. A week later, we had our room secured. We then proceeded to examine funding sources, to discover we had missed

the deadline for SGA co-sponsorship by a few days. We chose a new date, wrangled a new room, and applied for funding. Funding was secured, until another problem popped up: Thanksgiving break. By the time we regrouped after break, we had only a week until the proposed show, and no time to advertise. Once again, we began the process of rescheduling.

In the end, we called the whole process off. As a group leader, I was not delegating tasks well, and was not able to handle the club workload as well as my course load. That was my fault. As a result of this experience, there are multiple sections throughout the manual on setting goals, delegating, and accomplishing tasks. While many of these ideas seem logical, the implementation can be difficult. It takes a good leader to be able to step back and allow club members to take control. I can admit that I was not a very good leader. I was too afraid of things not letting me to let go, and as a result, nothing got done.

Another event that we held was an internal field trip to the Peace and Conflict Studies Center for a workshop on conflict resolution. The rationale for this workshop was that advocates for choice are portrayed, particularly in conservative media, as crazy, violent people who only care about themselves. By attending this workshop, we aimed to arm ourselves with the tools needed to handle confrontation with people we don't agree with in a way that would turn those stereotypes on their ear.

The workshop itself was great. The information presented, while not new to me due to similar lessons in social work classes, was new to the other attendees. The problem in the workshop lay in that only two club members other than myself showed up, when eight had

signed up. I was embarrassed, because Dr. Gerstein was putting on the workshop for us for free, and I was disappointed. One of the downfalls of student organizations is that it can be difficult for members to keep commitments.

There were events that went well. A few of us went together to a conference on healthcare access and privacy for women, where speakers from Planned Parenthood and several legislators shared their thoughts on current legislation. During this conference we also reconnected with a woman that we had met at a conference attended the month before with FA, who turned in to our mentor. This woman, Natalie, had founded a pro-choice club on Indiana University's campus in the 1990's, and still was an active advocate for women's rights while holding down a normal adult job. Natalie was a mentor in that she answered our questions and made suggestions about the club, but also in that she was an example of how we could use the skills we were developing as activists for the rest of our lives. Natalie connected us to resources and became a role model for civic engagement. She, and the group that she leads in Indianapolis, Indy Feminists, became our friends, and became at times the one good thing about Indiana this year, as the state struggled with attempts to legalize discrimination. They were proof that there were still good people here, who were willing to stand up for what is right.

Other events included phone banking against HJR6, the proposed constitutional amendment to legalize discrimination; listened to a men's right's activist speak during one of our normal meetings and had a peaceful discussion following the presentation; and held

tables at various events throughout the year: the spring activity fair, at the pre-show for the Vagina Monologues, at the Anti-Violence rally in Muncie, and at the Students for Creative Social Action's ActiFest gallery of social issues.

We also put on a flyer campaign. For this, we researched facts about reproductive rights, and printed them out on colored paper to hang about campus on different community bulletin boards. The purpose of this activity was to start conversations about common misconceptions surrounding reproductive choices. Whether discussions were started, we cannot say. However, this was an event in which activities were delegated and the entire club worked together to reach our goal of having flyers around campus.

Unfortunately, a series of rainy meeting nights combined with the stress of the end of the semester resulted in a drop off in meeting attendance. By the time elections rolled around, there was no one in attendance who would be on campus the following semester. Even the previous club officers had stopped attending meetings. Due to this lack of attendance and lack of interest, the club secretary and I decided that it was in all of our best interests to cease club activity. Emails were sent to reaffirm that no one wanted to take responsibility for the club.

Students for Reproductive Justice will no longer be an active student organization, come fall. I am disappointed, but I believe the work was worth it. For a brief while, we provided a place where people could safely discuss the issues of reproductive rights. We helped members develop tools for advocating, and advocating peacefully. Most importantly,



we all developed new relationships with people that we might not have otherwise met. In the world of activism, relationships are how things get accomplished. Without the collective, our voices are silent. With each other, we can accomplish anything.



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